DEAR, BUT WORTH IT.

SUCCESS OF A PLAY

The Paris Theater Claque and How It is Employed.

SOURCE OF PROFIT TO MANAGERS

Some of the Trials and Tribulations of the Directors.

RIGHTS OF AUTHORS

Correspondence of The Evening Star.

PARIS, October 25, 1896.

ONE OF THE MOST picturesque features of the theater in Paris is the claque. This is a body of picked men who break into applause at proper periods, according to arrangement with the management. Thanks to the claque, "cold" houses are unknown to the Paris actor.

The claque is not a mere mob of mercenary hand-clappers, dealing out applause unintelligently at so many francs a night, as is often supposed. On the contrary, it is composed of lovers of the lyric and dramatic stage, who take this means of gratifying their tastes free of charge. The claque is operated something after this fashion. A moneyed man, say a retired theatrical costumer, enters into a contract with the director of a theater, who confides to him "the general business of the success of pieces," and to him exclusively. His remuneration will be—his own and his employes' free entrance to the theater throughout the duration of the contract; a certain number of orchestra and balcony tickets, to be used for the best interests of the business, and a certain other supply of orchestra and balcony tickets, to be disposed of to his own advantage. Furthermore, the director guarantees to him on the first representations of new pieces the whole of the parterre (pit), to be given out by him according to his interest and discretion.

On his side, the chef de claque obliges himself (1) to do all in his power to assure the success of the new pieces represented in the theater so long as he is in charge; (2) to conform in all points to the usages of the management in this respect; (3) to be present at rehearsals, for the purpose of receiving instructions for directing the applause; (4) to protect the debuts of new actors and actresses; (5) to pay to the directors and actresses; (5) to employ only well-dressed applauders, and (6) to pay to the director of the theater the sum of, say, four thousand dollars' price, premiums or bonus for the contract.

Tickets at Reduced Prices.

It results from this that the theater starts with a fund of ready money for salaries, costumes and scenery; that cheerful first nights are assured by the packed parterre, and that the piece will run on smoothly ever after. To whom does the chef de claque give out these tickets? He gives them to no one. He sells them! At a reduced price, of course. But he still sells them. It is here the gambling chances of the chef de claque come in. At the beginning of a piece, when its success is doubtful, he is obliged in common prudence to give over all, or nearly all, his tickets to docile and obedient young men, themselves an enviable place, but in revenge they are tied down by iron-clad contracts with tremendous forfeits. And the playwrights, while they lord it over all the theaters, cannot but feel that their own regulations bear hard on all except the most successful.

As between director and playwright, an incident of the past season indicates the situation very clearly. The Varietes Theater is an old-established house of vaudeville, opera bouffe, burlesque and operette, in which capacity it brought out, long, long ago, most of the works of Herve, who wrote "Chilperic," "L'Oeil Creve,"—"The Busted Eye"—and all those other light, fantastic bouffes which so delighted our good fathers when they came to Paris under the third empire. No theater in Paris could more appropriately revive these pieces at the present day, and every one rejoiced when tuneful "Chilperic" was put

Knows He's in the Claque.

upon the boards again. The management received the greatest praise from the public for its lavish expenditure in scenery and costumes.

The troupe of the Varietes is a splendid one; yet, not content with this, they took on a whole bevy of supernumerary ladies of surprising loveliness, in order to do honor to the occasion. The result was a considerable success and the revival, shortly after, of "L'Oeil Creve." This latter little bouffe was running merrily enough when all at once—crack!—and the Society of Authors came down on M. Samuels, the director, cut the run short, and threatened the management of the Varietes with nothing less than shipwreck. M. Samuels had entered into an improper agreement with the heirs of Herve to take a lesser royalty than the laws of the society prescribe!

Combination of Authors.

Time was when the Theater Porte-Saint-Martin could secure a vaudeville for 200 francs cash or nine francs royalty for each representation, and the Ambigu, more generous, paid twenty-six francs per evening to the authors of its five-act dramas. But this was way back in the early thirties, before the business genius of Scribe had imagined and founded the Societe des Auteurs Dramatiques. A struggle of fifty years has resulted in a very different state of affairs today.

At the present hour not a director can take the administration of any Paris theater without having signed with the society—"legal representative and authorized mandataire of the whole mass of Paris authors"—an agreement to pay its playwright and composer royalties according to a settled scale. This royalty varies; for the Paris theaters between 10 and 12 per cent, while it is 15 per cent for the Opera and Comedie-Francaise. It is beautiful indeed for the composer and author who has his piece accepted, for the popular, the well-known, the well-to-do who can wait. But it is terrible for all others. The heirs of Herve were very willing indeed to take 5 per cent royalty for "L'Oeil Creve." But they are not allowed to do it!

The result of this tyranny of the Society of Authors is undoubtedly beneficial to the public and the stage. Directors of theaters are bound to have pieces, and as new pieces cost no more than old ones, new ones they will have. This is so true that "revivals" are constantly suspected, and directors engaging in them run considerable risk. Furthermore, as the price must be high, good pieces are regularly the only ones that see the light, and authorship is encouraged—a result that shows significantly in all the "adaptations from the French" which constantly appear on all the other stages of the world. Were it not for this "tyranny"

IN THE LOBBY.

university students, little clerks and the like—for, say, a franc or two apiece.

They go in squads, accompanied by one of the chef's employes, in order to applaud at his direction. Others, who pay higher for their seats—say, two to three francs each for the best places—are permitted to sit privately, and not in squads, but still applauding. Later on, when the success of the piece is perfectly assured, the claque, excepting the "old guard" around the chef himself, becomes almost exclusively composed of private persons, many of whom do not dream the true source of their tickets, for which they have paid, perhaps, a premium. The ticket speculators on the street or in the wine shops are all agents of the chef de claque.

Even the tourist must have noticed how it often happens that while there is nothing to be had at the box office, there are always sidewalk types with promises of the best seats, if you will only step around the corner. Around the corner the teachable and meek Parisian is led into a dingy cafe. Here in a corner there is set up a tiny model of the theater in question, like a doll's house. Pick out your seats—and pay a premium. These places appertain to "the concession." For the directors of Paris theaters are, despite their splendid opportunities, proverbially in hot water financially, and ever on the borrow, mortgaging their houses on for weeks ahead. Indeed, it is said that Sara Bernhardt's theater, the Renaissance, is today the only house, outside of the "subventioned" establishments, which is not horribly in debt and at the mercy of its chef de claque.

A Case of Grab.

Storm and stress, inconvenience and privation, avarice and greed and grabbing are, on every side, the characteristics of the theater in Paris; and it speaks highly for the value of the artistes and the playwrights, first, that these things are, and, secondly, that they should possibly continue to exist. Every one has, metaphorically, a pistol at his head. The public is held up by "the concession," the director and all his employes, down to the meanest. The director is between the fires of "the concession," the Society of Dramatic Authors, the powerful syndicate of artistes and the government itself, with its droit des pauvres. His life is scarcely worth the living. Theatrical artists have secured the theaters of Paris would soon run down to fraudulent misrepresentation. Pieces could be had for 25 francs a night again, and as the floating population of sightseekers is so great the trick would be most profitable—until the reputation of the Paris stage was ruined.

But even before the dramatic author has taken his 10 per cent each night out of the pocket of the unhappy director, the state has been before him for its 11 per cent! The city claims its droit des pauvres. Hand over 11 per cent of your gross receipts for the benefit of the poor!

This poor tax, which is over and above the state and city taxes paid by theaters as by all other business enterprises, is never less than 11 per cent of the total receipts. A theater which in the course of the year has taken in a sum of 500,000 francs is obliged to give up 55,000 to the administration of hospitals. What is most complained of in this exorbitant tax is that it is collected on the total receipts before the theater is allowed to pay itself for its daily expenses.

A few years ago the director of one of the chief theaters of the Boulevard was thrown into bankruptcy after three years' management. His liabilities amounted to 200,000 francs more than his assets. During his three years he had been obliged to pay over from his gross receipts, before everything else, under the name of poor tax, the sum of 330,000 francs for the hospitals. If this sum had been collected only after the daily expenses of the theater were provided for the share of the poor would have been much reduced. But the manager would not have been bankrupt nor have left more than 500 actors, employes and workmen without place or food. The public assistance, which profited by this application of the law, certainly did not come to their rescue. In recent years the total annual receipts of the theaters of Paris amount to $7,000,000. The poor tax turned over from this to the public assistance is thus, in round numbers, $770,000 each year. These are very curious figures, but the whole subject of municipal government in France is strange in our eyes. They are the most taxed people in the civilized world. No wonder Paris is beautiful!

In the end the public pays, as always. The admission prices to the Paris theaters are necessarily high.

STERLING HEILIG.

INDIARUBBER AGE

Some Idea of the Gigantic Growth of the Industry.

INCREASING USE FOR VEHICLE TIRES

This Country Leads in the Manufacture of These Goods.

WHERE IT IS FOUND

IT WAS A FRENCHman that first spoke of our own times as "The Indiarubber Age." The aptness of this expression does not at first sight impress itself. One has heard the end of the nineteenth century described as the "Iron Age" and the "Age of Electricity." But consideration shows that the term "Indiarubber Age" is something more than a witticism descriptive of modern elasticity. The part played among us by rubber is quite as important as that of either iron or electricity; and the field which rubber covers is, if humbler, notably vaster, than the fields covered by those two other great agents of civilization. Rubber has indeed become a necessity, where electricity and iron are merely desiderata. Hence the justification of the French savant and his "Indiarubber Age."

Some slight idea of the gigantic growth of rubber industries may be gleaned from the following remarks of the manager of a New York vehicle factory: "We have fitted 5,000 carriages with rubber tires in New York city alone during the past two years; and there are scores of firms competing with us.

"Moreover, we have put rubber tires on at least 35,000 vehicles in other parts of the country, and yet the movement only took commercial shape four years ago. It began with the livery stables which keep cabs and carriages for hire. The keepers of such vehicles found out that when parties of two or more wanted to go to the theater or to a dance, they could not speak softly as they wished to do. The granite pavements caused this noise, and when the rubber tires were introduced people discovered that they could at length enjoy a drive in comfort. First private carriages were thus equipped, and then the livery stable keepers were obliged in self-defense to follow suit. Now even the delivery vans have their rubber tires."

Bicycles' Big Impetus.

Of course the ubiquitous bicycle has done much to send rubber importations careering upwards. Rubber importers are quite sure that the gradual rise in the price of Para rubber for the last few years is due to the demand for pneumatic tires for bicycles. A writer in the London Times has recently carefully estimated the output of bicycles in the United States for the present year at 1,000,000, and of Great Britain at 750,000. Each of these bicycles will require two pneumatic tires, or altogether 3,500,000. Each pair of tires weighs about 3 1-2 pounds, of which two pounds are Para rubber. There will thus be 3,500,000 pounds of Para rubber consumed out of a total production for the Amazon basin of 45,788,613 pounds for the year 1895. Thus, roughly speaking, 8 per cent of all the Para rubber now produced goes into bicycle tires.

It is only in bicycle tires and in fine mackintoshes that the better grades of Para rubber are used pure. For all other purposes either inferior qualities of Para rubber are taken, or the better grades are blended with rubber from other parts of the world, such as Central America, Africa and the East Indies. The total quantity of rubber exported from these countries amounts to a little more than half that derived from the Amazon basin. The defect of all inferior rubbers is their tendency to grow soft after a certain amount of wear.

The rubber shoe industry consumes a very large quantity of rubber, there being several factories in New England which can each make 30,000 pairs of rubber shoes a day. Some idea of the total output may be gathered from the annual auction sales of rubber shoes in Boston last November, when 40,000 cases of shoes were sold for $500,000, representing some 4,000,000 pairs of shoes. Large as this number may seem, it only represented "seconds," as the perfect goods were disposed of in the ordinary way.

How the Children Helped.

During the year 1894 the public school children of New York city used three tons of rubber ink erasers, while those of Brooklyn used two tons. It has been calculated from the books of a large manufacturer that the school children of a town of 12,000 inhabitants use 8,640 rubber bands every year, larger towns and cities using proportionate quantities.

Less than half the bulk of the white rubber which we see in tubing, ink erasers, cheap toys and other articles consists of the pure gum, whiting and talc being added to give these goods their characteristic appearance and to make them resists oxidation longer. An enumeration of the various uses of rubber in the arts would fill a large volume. Thus, the surgeon is able to perform bloodless operations by using Esmarch's bandage; he uses an atomizer to spray disinfectants, he uses rubber tubing to drain wounds and rubber syringes to irrigate them, and sometimes he orders rubber hot water bags for his patients. The dentist uses a rubber base in which to fix a set of false teeth. The electrician wears rubber gloves when he wishes to insulate his hands from the danger of a chance current, and mixes rubber with all the insulating material for wires above water.

Rubber is Everywhere.

There is hardly a business man and no post office in the country which have not more than one rubber stamp. Every billiard table has rubber cushions. Nearly every working horse in the country has a rubber sheet to protect him in wet weather. There must be 20,000,000 men and boys in the United States today wearing elastic suspenders, and at least an equal number of women and girls who wear elastic garters. Every theater has its rubber gas bags, while nearly every house has at least one rubber mat. Rubber belting is extensively used in machine shops, while rubber valves and washers are common adjuncts of water pipes and steam fillings. Tortoise and shell combs, except as ornaments, have been entirely superseded by those made of hard rubber. Vulcanite mouthpieces are now far more common on pipes than those made of amber or bone.

Noiseless rubber tires for cabs and carriages have already driven steel tires into the background in London, Paris, St. Petersburg and all the large cities of Europe. Rubber horseshoes are now worn by racers and circus horses alike, and the use of rubber tires and horseshoes is rapidly becoming common in this country. Horseless carriages, which are now seen so frequently in the streets of Paris as to attract no attention, are all equipped with pneumatic tires. In short, there is no end to the uses of rubber, and its adaptability to new purposes receives daily illustration in almost every fresh mechanical invention. What is better still, the United States leads the world in the manufacture of rubber goods of every description.

John Bull Competes With Us.

But how long the United States can continue to hold this practical monopoly is quite another question. It is a singular fact that at this stage of the "Indiarubber Age," the rubber tree should remain practically uncultivated; and that to this very lack of cultivation the land of Uncle Sam should owe its supremacy in the trade. England has awakened to the fact that vast profits may lie in the systematic cultivation of the trees best calculated to produce the wonderful gum. It happens, however, that the American importers, having established lines of communication with the natives of Brazil who gather the crude rubber from the wild trees, are very anxious to retain for themselves their partial monopoly, and are therefore almost unanimous in pooh-poohing the planting of forests of rubber trees as unnecessary and unprofitable.

On the other hand, Englishmen interested in rubber seem fascinated with the prospects of the profits which might be derived from the systematic cultivation of rubber trees. They have already established plantations in British India, Ceylon and Trinidad, and have indirectly aided the establishment of similar plantations in Mexico. One result of the attention which British Guiana has lately been receiving through the Venezuelan boundary dispute is likely to be the planting of rubber trees in that country, where the soil and climate is peculiarly favorable for their growth. It should not be forgotten that the English have been very successful in the cultivation of trees and shrubs which yield valuable products.

England Has Succeeded Before.

Thus they brought sugar cane plantations to a high state of perfection in Jamaica. By transplanting the cinchona tree from Peru to India they reduced the price of quinine from $2 to twenty-five cents an ounce; the tea shrub in their hands in Assham threatens to destroy the demand for the Chinese variety of tea. It will be seen that Para rubber commands a price one-third higher than the best of any other country. The crude rubber from the Congo sells at forty cents a pound, but it has been proposed to transplant the rubber trees from the Amazon basin to that of the Congo, both rivers being situated in the tropical regions, and the conditions of soil along the banks of each being similar.

With the prospect of such an immense increase in the annual rubber output, and of a battle royal between the English capitalists and the present American monopolists, there appears to be all the greater reason for styling this "the Indiarubber Age."

RUBBER TREES (PARA VARIETY) SHOWING METHOD OF OBTAINING THE GUM FROM TREES.

The Story of Samson.

From Harper's Bazar.

With distended eyes, mouth and ears, Tommy Traddles heard his Sunday school teacher tell about Samson and his long hair and his wonderful feats of strength, and his weakness after Delilah had shorn him of his leonine locks.

"An' he didn't have any strength at all after he got a hair cut?" he asked, incredulously.

"No; his strength was in his long hair, and when his locks were gone he was powerless," explained the teacher.

When Tommy came the following Sunday, his face was a trifle scratched and one of his eyes was discolored. He had very little to say, but was evidently doing a great deal of thinking.

"Say, teacher," he said at last, "I don't think much of that Samson story you told us last Sunday."

"Why so, Tommy?" inquired the teacher.

"Oh, you see, Johnny Jones, he's bigger'n me, an' he's captain of the Young Rovers' foot ball team, an' he wore his hair long, like all of those kickers. An' him an' me isn't good friends, an' last Tuesday me an' Jimmy Hawkins and Bob White—we all caught him alone, an' piled onto him an' held him down an' cut off all his long hair with ma's shears."

"That wasn't at all nice, Tommy," reproved the teacher, "but I suppose you were thinking of the story of Samson?"

"Yes, that is just what I was thinkin' of."

"And you thought his strength was in his hair?"

"Yes'm, that's just what I thought."

"Well, was it?"

"Was it?" Tommy replied, disgustedly. "I met him all alone yestiddy. Was it? Say, just look at that eye."

Comfort in the Bath Room.

From the London Morning.

It is worthy of note what a difference is made by the addition of a few inexpensive luxuries to the appearance of a bath room. The bath itself must, of course, always be kept spotlessly clean and the taps brilliantly polished, and the linoleum covering the floor always carefully swept and washed; but even more than this is needed to make a really comfortable bath room. A cork or rubber mat should be kept in every bath room. Woolen mats are useless; they absorb the moisture and become unhygienic. A place should be found on the wall for a mirror—a plain one with a black frame will answer the purpose admirably; the longer it is the better, and it should be placed where there is a good light. Two wire trays should also be fastened to the wall beside the bath, and low enough to be within easy reach of the person using it. These are to hold the sponge and flannel and soap when not in use during the bath. Also shelves should be made and placed upon the walls of every bath room; these may be of plain deal, enameled any color that is liked. Upon them may be placed cold cream, shaving soap, a bottle of ammonia, pumice stone and all the little accessories used in the toilet. Plenty of soap should always be provided and towels in abundance, and with all these little comforts the daily bath will be indeed an unmixed pleasure.

Reflections of a Bachelor.

From the New York Press.

The average hawk isn't in it with some kind of doves.

You never can convince a good girl that she doesn't know all about married life.

Whenever a girl gets a thrill that she doesn't understand she wonders if she is in love.

One good thing about hell is that the devil is masculine, and whatever he does, he won't nag.

When a woman gets to heaven the first thing she will do is to look to see how large the closets are.

A woman will cry over a pathetic baby story and then box her children's ears because they won't be quiet and let her read.

HEROIC FIGURE OF NEPTUNE.

LIBRARY FOUNTAIN

Elaborate Design for the Main Entrance to the Building.

HEROIC FIGURE OF NEPTUNE

Romping Sea Horses and Half-Submerged Turtles.

THREE DEEP NICHES

VISITORS TO THE new building which has been constructed for the use of the Congressional Library note the progress which is being made in bringing to completion the elaborate details of the interior finish. There has been no building erected by the government which has been so richly and [illegible] as has the Congressional Library. From an architectural standpoint, the interior of this building, when completed, will represent the highly decorative.

The exterior is practically finished, even to the grading of the grounds and the sodding. There is one detail, however, of the exterior which is likely to prove one of the notable and attractive features of the structure which has not yet been put in place. Workmen are now engaged in preparing for the erection of a fountain which is to be situated in front of the steps which lead up on each side of the terrace to the library building.

The design of this fountain, which is described as effective as well as appropriate, was made by Roland Hinton Perry, a New York sculptor, who made the series of bas reliefs for the hall and main staircase of

ONE OF THE SEA HORSES.

the library. The fountain will have the light granite face of the terrace for a background, the wall having three deep niches in its surface.

In the center niche, on a rough granite rock, is to be the Neptune, a figure of heroic size. Against the rock on either side of it lean Tritons blowing conch shells. Beneath the rock, at the front, a huge sea serpent seems to escape, while in the niches between the serpent and the Tritons two frogs will spout jets of water across the basin.

The niches at the sides will contain Oceanides—females astride of romping sea horses. Streams of water will be numerous, sent inward from the outer edge of the semicircle by half-submerged turtles.

The artist has completed the figure of Neptune and sent it to the foundry to be cast. Progress is being made on the other details of this rather elaborate design, and it is expected that the fountain will be ready to be put in place early in the spring.

NOW HE'S IN CONGRESS.

Once He Was a Thief and Looked Down Upon Statesmen.

From the Detroit Free Press.

This is a story once told a few confidential friends by a strapping six-foot, broad-shouldered statesman from one of the southern states:

"I was making my first trip to Washington as a Congressman. The weather in our section of the country was delightful, and so long as it remained so along my route I traveled on horseback. One night I put up at an old tavern near which they were having a country fair, and found such a rush of business at the hostelry that two of us were assigned to the same bed. My room-mate was a nice-looking young fellow, but not talkative, so I was soon asleep. Later I awakened suddenly to see him dressed and helping himself to my valuables. Going between him and the door, I expressed surprise that he was a thief. The fellow was cool, sharp and had the airs of a gentleman.

"'What are you?' he asked.

"'A lawyer and a Congressman.'

"'Heavens!' he chuckled. 'I guess I was lucky to wake first.'

"I had to laugh, despite myself, and asked if he had any proposition to make.

"'I think I will retain you for the defense,' he said, slowly. 'That means you will get your own back and all I have. Just my luck.'

"He had me in good humor and gradually I drew his story from him and believed it. I was not as skeptical then as I have been made by wider experiences. I agreed to call it all off, gave some good advice, took back my property and we returned to bed. What do you suppose became of him?"

"Either hung or in the penitentiary," answered a cynical listener.

"No, gentlemen, he's in Congress himself now."

ELECTRIC DOORS.

Remarkable Mechanism for the Entrance to a Public Building.

From the Springfield Republican.

The city has a new plaything in the form of the electric doors at the Dwight street entrance to the new city market. These doors are one of the chief attractions of the market, judging from the streams of people who keep passing in and out of the entrance just to have "sesame open." These doors are the only electric doors in use this side of Chicago, and many will undoubtedly find them worth coming miles to see. As one steps onto the wire mat at the entrances and sees the huge doors open swiftly but noiselessly before him he thinks that he has indeed touched the mainsprings of life. If one person is following another the door being in the act of closing does not, like the ordinary door, slam in one's face, but gently recedes from whatever position it may have reached and the passage is clear until the person or persons have passed through. When there are enough passers to fill the doorway both doors stand wide open, apparently lifeless, but when the last person is through the portals close in a twinkling.

The mechanism and manner of operation of the door is this: A handsome cabinet over the doorway on the inside of the building contains the electric motors, magnets, clutches, etc. Through the bottom of this cabinet depend arms, one connecting each wing with its corresponding motor mechanism and through which the power is applied to move it. Through the doorway is spread an electric mat connected by wires with the electric mechanism in the cabinet. The doors being in a closed position, stepping upon the mat closes the circuit through one or more of the many metal circuit closers, causing the armature of the mat magnet to be depressed and an electric switch connected with it to turn a current through the clutch magnet, releasing the pulley upon which is wound the belt through which the motor closes the door and the springs pull the door open. Upon stepping from the mat the circuit is broken through the mat magnet and consequently the switch attached to its armature cuts the current out of the clutch magnet, leaving the belt pulley secured to its shaft and the motor current is turned on. The motor revolves and winds the door shut, at the same time winding up the springs that are to open the door for the next operation. One of the most mysterious things about the whole thing is that standing upon the same spot on the mat at one time controls one door, at another the other, depending upon the position of the doors and whether one is entering or leaving the building. When the doors are closed no current is used and the cost of operation is extremely small. The 110-volt regular current is used. Each door is provided with an ingeniously devised guard that directs to the right-hand side, thus protecting from the other wing opening should a passer approach from the opposite side to leave the building while you are entering. The inventors are Oliver H. Hicks and Robertus F. Troy of Chicago.

A Street Crowd.

From the Boston Advertiser.

The easiest thing on the face of the earth to entertain is a street crowd. Everything but curiosity in such a motley jam is forgotten. Rich and poor, ignorant and learned, stand elbow to elbow with craned necks and open mouths. Just such a crowd as this blocked the way on Tremont street yesterday at frequently recurring intervals. Every time a very solemn-looking man appeared in the show window there was a scramble to see whose nose would be flattened on the plate glass first. All the solemn-looking man did was to open a couch and proceed to make it into a bed by turning the plush cover mattress side up and putting on a pair of pillows. When the pillows were squared up the crowd was so great that a policeman had to compel the outer layer of spectators to move on. They did so, grumblingly.

Then the bed was unmade, and a parlor couch greeted the people, who smiled and departed. In a few minutes this scene was again enacted. The bed-making man never once relaxed his countenance or hastened his laborious movements.

A Question for Prophets.

From the Roxbury Gazette.

Gazway—"Speaking of the world being round, there's one thing that bothers me."

Jizney—"What's that?"

Gazway—"If it's true that it's round, how is it possible for it to come to an end?"

AS PACKING.

Why Japanese Toothpicks and Fans Are Cheap.

From the Jewellers' Review.

It has often been a matter of wonder that Japanese manufactures, such as toothpicks and fans, could be sold at such low prices. The small fans are sold at a cent apiece, while the dainty little toothpicks command the same price per bundle.

When one examines either of these products and speculates upon the amount of labor that must be spent to make them in any quantity, the natural inference is that the well-known smallness of Japanese wages contains the explanation. At a first glance this seems to be the natural explanation. Such skilled workers as watchmakers get but a trifle more than a dollar a week for their services, and the less skilled and more mechanical trades command a pittance that to our western ideas seems incredibly small.

But small as the wages of the Japanese worker may be, there are considerations that indicate at once that some other cause must be found. There is a duty on both the articles mentioned, and in addition to this it must be remembered that Japan is far away, and that, in the natural course, freights would give a considerable price in this market to articles that were entirely without cost in the orient.

A visit to several Japanese importing houses, which deal exclusively in fine Satsuma and other native wares and in Japanese curios, revealed the secret of the prices at which the small wares could be offered here. The large vases, which form the staple imports of the concerns called upon, require the most careful packing, lest on their long journey they come to grief; and here is where the toothpicks and fans not only work their passage, but legally escape duty. Packed in and around the vases are many thousands of these articles, and by this use they lose their character as merchandise and become merely so much "packing."

The Difference.

From the Indianapolis Journal.

"The essential difference between the man and the woman," said the cheerful idiot, "is one of wear and tear."

"Eh?" said the new boarder.

"Yes. Man spends his money foolishly on a tear and woman on wear."